



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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WSDA seeks comment on apple maggot proposal for Yakima County

OLYMPIA – A public hearing on the Washington State Department of Agriculture's (WSDA) proposal to quarantine the western portion of Yakima County for apple maggots will be held next week in Yakima.

The public hearing also will consider a proposal to redraw the boundaries of the existing Kittitas County apple maggot quarantine, removing from the quarantine a large part of the area south of Interstate 90 where approximately 25 growers are located.

The hearing will be at 1 p.m. March 24 in the Washington State Department of Agriculture's conference room at 21 North 1st Avenue, Yakima.

The proposed quarantine in Yakima County is the result of multiple catches of apple maggots in the Nile Valley last summer. Approximately half of the county is in the proposed quarantined zone; however, WSDA officials point out the proposed quarantine will have a minimum impact on apple growers in the county because few, if any, are located in the proposed quarantine zone.

The proposal allows commercial apples to be shipped from the quarantined area if accompanied by a WSDA-issued certificate stating that no apple maggot flies were trapped within a half-mile of the orchard shipping the fruit, or that flies were caught within a half-mile of the orchard but inspections reveal no apple maggot larvae in the fruit. The boundary separating the quarantined from the non-quarantined area is a north-south line running the length of the county located approximately 10 miles west of Yakima. The quarantine will go into effect Aug. 15, 2005 if approved, allowing the industry sufficient time to implement the ruling.

WSDA officials stress the purpose of apple maggot quarantines in the state is to keep major apple production areas free of the pest—a program that has been very successful since the first apple maggot was detected in the state in 1980. Major apple-producing areas in the state today are free of apple maggots, and apple maggots have never been found in any commercially packed fruit in Washington.

Residents in quarantined areas are not allowed to move backyard fruit into non-quarantined Washington areas. About 53 percent of apples grown in the U.S. are grown in Washington.

At the March 24 public hearing, persons may present material orally or in writing. Written material must be received no later than March 24 by Henri Gonzales, state Department of Agriculture. Material may be sent by e-mail to hgonzales@agr.wa.gov; by mail at P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560; or FAX (360) 902-2094.

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